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2020

## Sociology of Sexualities

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*CUNY City College*

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**SOC 38209 / WS 31610**  
**City College – CUNY**  
**Fall 2020 (Online)**

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Office Hours: 1-2pm Sundays  
on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

## **Sociology of Sexualities**

**Course Description:** Drawing on sociological, feminist, and queer theories, this course is designed to provide an introduction to the field of sexualities studies. We will examine how understandings of sexual desire, behavior, and identity have shifted over time. As social constructions of sexuality changed, so did sexual politics. Because sexuality is an organizing principle in society, a sociological examination necessitates a focus on power. Therefore, throughout our investigation, we will pay close attention to how heterosexism interacts with racism and other structures of oppression.

**Course Objectives:** You can expect to learn from this class

- ✓ How sexuality is socially constructed and interacts with other power structures;
- ✓ How to critically read theoretical and empirical articles and assess their contemporary applications; and
- ✓ How to construct coherent arguments, provide supporting evidence, articulate reasoned judgements, and draw appropriate conclusions.

**Course Materials:** This course is designated as [Zero Textbook Cost](#) meaning that you are not required to purchase any books for this course. Course material will be accessed through our Blackboard course site. If you have trouble downloading a reading or find a broken hyperlink, please contact me asap so I can get you the reading and fix the problem.

### **Where Do I Find...?**

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## **Learning Environment Expectations and Needs**

Your success in this class is important to me. Learning through this class will come through careful preparation and active discussion. This class seeks to provide an environment that is inclusive in order to ensure access to learning opportunities for all participants.

**Mutual Respect:** We will operate on the basis of mutual respect. One way of showing respect is [using inclusive language](#) in written work.

**Accessibility:** Students with disabilities of any kind (including learning, physical, and mental disabilities) and those who suspect they may have a disability are encouraged to contact the AccessAbility Center in order to register for disability-related academic accommodations. To make an intake appointment, call (212) 650-5913 or TTY/TTD 212-650-8441 or email [disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu). The AccessAbility Center/Student Disability Services ensures equal access and full participation to all of City College's programs, services, and activities by coordinating and implementing appropriate accommodations. If you require any additional accommodations throughout the course, please feel free to contact me privately. We can work together to ensure that each student's needs are met.

**Writing Center:** If you do not have a documented disability, remember that other support services are available to all students. The Writing Center offers one-on-one assistance for students working on writing assignments and projects from any discipline. Writing consultants will work with you on planning, drafting, and revising. For more information and to make an appointment, [visit their website](#).

**Counseling Center:** College can be stressful as you balance packed schedules while life demands continue to pull on you. Additionally, you are encountering new ideas that may challenge you to question old assumptions. If you need additional support at any point in the semester, I encourage you to [contact the Counseling Center](#). You can leave a voicemail at 212-650-8222 and they will return your call as soon as possible or email [counseling@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:counseling@ccny.cuny.edu).

**Life Interruptions:** If there are circumstances (personal, health-related, family-related, etc.) that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for alternative arrangements.



## Course Assignments and Grading

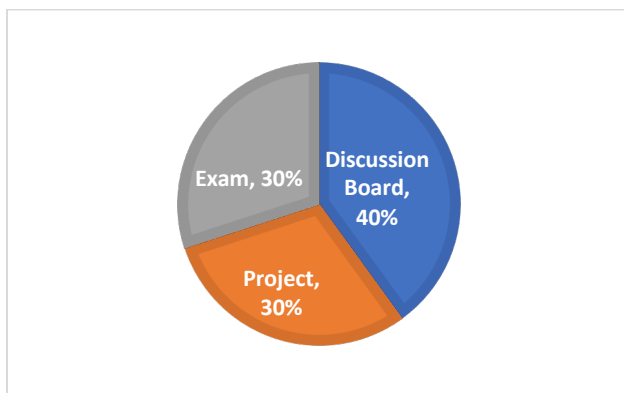
In this course, learning will be assessed based on consistent active engagement (discussion board), comprehension of material (exam), and articulation of an analytic argument supported by social science evidence (project). Below are brief descriptions of assignments. Complete descriptions along with grading rubrics are available on Blackboard. All work will be submitted via Blackboard. Although I encourage students to meet with me throughout the semester to discuss their progress and performance (this is a great use of office hours!), all grades are non-negotiable.

Percentage	Grade						
93-100	A	90-92	A-	87-89	B+	83-86	B
80-82	B-	77-79	C+	73-76	C	70-72	C-
60-69	D	<60	F				

**Discussion Board (40 points):** Discussion board forums are your opportunity to engage with the course material and your peers. Each weekly class session will have a forum for which I pose a prompt or series of prompts. After completing the lecture and course material for the week, write and post an answer to the prompt. If there are multiple prompts, choose one. Then respond to three of your peers' answers. Each forum is worth 5 points. I will drop your four lowest forum grades. Further instructions, including a grading rubric, are available on Blackboard under Course Information.

**Project (30 points):** For your project, you will research a social problem wherein sexuality is a key element and select a genre in which to present your findings. You may choose from an op-ed, policy brief, personal narrative, or piece of art. Specific guidelines are posted on Blackboard under Project. Whichever genre you choose, your project will cite a minimum of 10 sources, which can include course readings. At least 5 of the sources – not inclusive of course readings – must be peer-reviewed and published within the last ten years. To scaffold the project, you will submit a proposal and update along the way in order to get periodic feedback. The final project will be graded on clarity of argument, strength of evidence, structure, and mechanics.

**Exam (30 points):** In this exam, you will be asked to demonstrate your command of the main concepts, theoretical arguments, and empirical findings covered in the course material. A study guide will be provided prior to the exam date.



**Late Work:**

- Discussion Board: Unless prior arrangements have been made, no discussion board posts will be accepted for grading after the deadline. You are welcome to submit posts early. If you miss the deadline, you can submit your work for no grade. I'll still read it and give you feedback.
- Project: Provided you submit the final project on time, you will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit it if you are disappointed with the grade. A resubmission must be accompanied with a cover letter detailing how you have revised the final project in response to instructor feedback. I recommend reaching out to me should you decide to take advantage of this opportunity. We can discuss your revision plan and agree to a resubmission deadline to assist with time management.

**Academic Integrity:** You are responsible for [being aware of and understanding the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity](#).

- Academic dishonesty (e.g. cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse) will not be tolerated and ignorance/carelessness is not an acceptable excuse for violation of college guidelines.
- In the event that academic misconduct has occurred, the student will receive a failing grade (0) on the assignment.
- You should consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic integrity prior to the submission of an assignment.

### **Course Communication**

**Technology:** This course will be run through Blackboard.

- Please make sure you are able to access Blackboard and [notify IT Services if you are having difficulties](#).
- Also, double-check that the email address in your Bb account is current. This is the only way that I can contact you.
  - If you don't have access to the email address that's in Blackboard and / or don't check it regularly, switch it to an email address that you do check.
  - To check your email address in Bb: on the main Blackboard page (where you can see all of your courses), go to the Tools menu on the left, select Update Email, enter your preferred email address.

**Instructor's Office Forum on the Discussion Board:** I created this forum so that you can ask any questions you might have about the course.

- Subscribe to this forum so that you will be alerted when there is a new post.
- Feel free to post questions about the syllabus, due dates, and assignments. You're probably not the only one with that question!
- Personal questions about grades, etc. should be emailed to me.

**Email Communication:** Feel free to email me with any concerns or questions and I will do my best to get back to you within 24 hours, longer over the weekend or on holidays. If you have not received a response within two business days, it's appropriate to send a follow-up email.

- In each of your emails, include your name and the course title (e.g. Sexualities) in addition to your question. Remember to include a meaningful subject line.
- If you are emailing to arrange a time to meet outside of my office hours, offer at least three possible times you are available and specify what you would like to talk about. We will be using Bb Collaborate Ultra for office hours and individual appointments.
- For this class and your general professional development, you may want to [review these guidelines on emailing professors](#).

**Name and Gender Changes on CUNY Records:** Students have the right to select a preferred first and/or middle name for use on non-official records.

- A preferred name is not a legal name but is generally used to address how others refers to the student in accordance with the student's wishes.
- Non-official records include student identification cards, email addresses, and course rosters.
- Students have the right to change their gender in CUNY records. A student's gender identity may not match the gender information provided on their admissions application. This policy permits students to revise this information.
- [Read the policy to learn how to change your name and/or gender on your CUNY records](#).

**Sexual Assault and Unwelcome Sexual Behavior:** Every community member of The City University of New York, including students, employees, and visitors, deserves the opportunity to live, learn and work free from sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, and sexual violence.

- CUNY's policy on sexual misconduct is based on the practice of affirmative consent.
- Familiarize yourself with [your rights and responsibilities](#) as a member of the CUNY community.

## Course Schedule

(subject to change – last updated August 17, 2020)

Week	Topic	Synchronous Class Meeting	Readings & Other Course Material	Deadlines
1	Class Orientation	Thursday, August 27 5 - 6:15pm		
2	Studying Sexualities		Steven Epstein, "A Queer Encounter: Sociology and the Study of Sexuality"  Laura Carpenter, "The Ambiguity of 'Having Sex': The Subjective Experience of Virginity Loss in the United States"	Discussion Board due 11:59pm Thursday, Sept. 3
3	History of Sexuality		James Joseph Dean, <i>Straights: Heterosexuality in Post-Closeted Culture</i> (Chapter 2)  Siobhan Somerville, "Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body"	Discussion Board due 11:59pm Thursday, Sept. 10
4	The Closet & Coming Out		Abigail Saguy, " <a href="#">The History of 'Coming Out,' from Secret Gay Code to Political Protest</a> "  Steven Seidman, Chet Meeks, and Francie Traschen, "Beyond the Closet? The Changing Social Meaning of Homosexuality in the United States"  Abigail C. Saguy and Anna Ward, "Coming Out as Fat: Rethinking Stigma"	Sept. 15 Last day to drop classes without the grade of "W"  Discussion Board due 11:59pm Thursday, Sept. 17
5	Racialized Sexualities		Patricia Hill Collins, "Prisons for our Bodies Closets for Our Minds: Racism, Heterosexism, and Black Sexuality"  Audre Lorde, "I am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities"  JeeYeun Lee, "Why Suzie Wong Is Not a Lesbian: Asian and Asian American Lesbian and Bisexual Women and Femme/Butch/Gender Identities"	Project Proposal & Discussion Board due 11:59pm Thursday, Sept. 24
6	Sexual Identities		Rebecca Plante, "LGBTQQA(H): The Alphabet Soup of Sexualities"  Melissa M. Wilcox, "lgbttsqqiaa..."  Philosophy Talk Podcast, " <a href="#">Queerness</a> " (\$1.99 iTunes)  Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, Carlos Decena, Héctor Carrillo, and Tomás Almaguer, "Revisiting <i>Activos</i> and <i>Pasivos</i> :"	Discussion Board due 11:59pm Thursday, October 1

Week	Topic	Synchronous Class Meeting	Readings & Other Course Material	Deadlines
			Toward New Cartographies of Latino/Latin American Male Same-Sex Desire"	
7	Sexual Hierarchies		Gayle S. Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality"  David M. Halperin, "The War on Sex"	Discussion Board due 11:59pm Thursday, October 8
8	Sexual Politics		Steven Seidman, "From Identity to Queer Politics: Shifts in the Social Logic of Normative Heterosexuality in Contemporary America"  Cathy Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?"  Queer Nation, "Queers Read This"  Everyday Feminism, " <a href="#">Homonormativity 101</a> "	Discussion Board due 11:59pm Thursday, Oct. 15
9	AIDS Activism	Tuesday, October 20, 5 – 7:30pm	Jim Hubbard (dir.), <i>United in Anger: A History of ACT Up</i> (video)	Project Update due 11:59pm Thursday, Oct. 22
10	Religion & Sexuality		Orit Avishai and Kelsy Burke, "God's Case for Sex"  Asifa Siraj, "'I Don't Want to Taint the Name of Islam': The Influence of Religion on the Lives of Muslim Lesbians"  Schmitz and Woodell, "Complex Processes of Religion and Spirituality Among Midwest LGBTQ Homeless Young Adults"	Discussion Board due 11:59pm Thursday, Oct. 29
11	Politics of Desire		Molly Silvestrini, "'It's not something I can shake: The Effect of Racial Stereotypes, Beauty Standards, and Sexual Racism on Interracial Attraction"  Chong-suk Han, "No fats, femmes, or Asians: The utility of critical race theory in examining the role of gay stock stories in the marginalization of gay Asian men"	Discussion Board due 11:59pm Thursday, Nov. 5  Nov. 6 last day to withdraw with "W" grade
12	Heterosexual Masculinities		Salvador Vidal-Ortiz and Brandon Andrew Robinson, "The Racial and Sexual Stereotypes of the 'down low' on Craigslist.org"  Jane Ward, "Dude-Sex: White Masculinities and 'Authentic' Heterosexuality Among Dudes Who Have Sex with Dudes"	Discussion Board due 11:59pm Thursday, Nov. 12



Week	Topic	Synchronous Class Meeting	Readings & Other Course Material	Deadlines
13	Queer Femininities		<p>Alison Better, "Redefining Queer: Women's Relationships and Identity in an Age of Sexual Fluidity"</p> <p>Jamie Budnick, "'Straight Girls Kissing' Beyond the Elite College Campus"</p> <p>Carla Pfeffer, "'I Don't Like Passing as a Straight Woman': Queer Negotiations of Identity and Social Group Membership"</p>	Discussion Board due 11:59pm Thursday, Nov. 19
14	Representation & Filmmaking	Tuesday, November 24, 5 – 7:30pm	Dee Rees (dir.), <i>Pariah</i> (video)	Project due 11:59pm Wednesday, Nov. 25
15	Sex Education		<p>Lorena Garcia, "Now Why Do You Want to Know That?: Heteronormativity, Sexism, and Racism in the Sexual (Mis)education of Latina Youth"</p> <p>Jaclyn Friedman and Jessica Valenti (eds), <i>Yes Means Yes: Visions of Female Sexual Power and a World Without Rape</i> (Forward, Chapters 2 &amp; 3)</p> <p>Jamie O'Quinn and Jessica Fields, "The Future of Evidence: Queerness in Progressive Visions of Sexuality Education"</p>	Discussion Board due 11:59pm Thursday, Dec. 3
16	Wrap Up	Tuesday, December 8 5 – 6:15pm		
17	Exam			TBA